

Spirit of Flora

Getting Ready



“History has remembered the kings and warriors,
because they destroyed; art has remembered
the people, because they created.”

William Morris



I love designing crochet along projects and enjoy turning my inspiration source into motifs for crocheters to work through. I often design my CALs in the same way, intending them to be used as a learning tool to guide you through lots of techniques, so that they start relatively easy and get progressively harder.

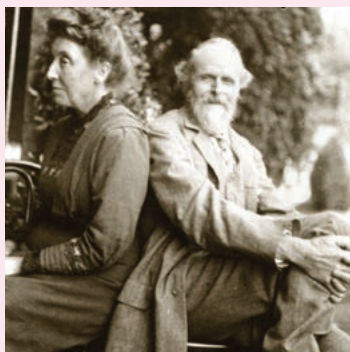
The Spirit of Flora project differs from my past CAL projects in that I want to encourage you to release a little of your own design potential to create a unique and personal project. I have designed twelve patterned square blocks along with a couple of simple motifs, all of which are shown in my original colourway and in alternative colour sequences using a palette of thirteen yarn shades. Alternatively, you could choose to stash dive and use up some of the special yarns you have hidden away at home! Either way, the emphasis is on creating a project that suits your style and purpose. You could choose to make a large blanket using forty-eight crochet squares or you might want to make a smaller one using fewer motifs or less repeated blocks. You might want to make a bag, a cushion, or a shawl for example. There are endless possibilities and I really hope you will feel inspired to join me on this exciting crochet journey.

The Spirit of Flora Crochet Along project ran over the course of twelve months in 2023 and was published in Inside Crochet Magazine with one crochet block featuring in each issue. Now that the rights to the patterns have reverted to me, they will be released as separate patterns, both in download and paper form. You can choose whether you fancy making a project using all the motifs or cherry pick a few to create a truly personal project.

Janie
x

Jane Crowfoot





Design Inspiration

When I designed The Climbing Rose Wrap in 2019, I used the work of William Morris as my inspiration. In 2020 I used the work of his daughter May as the basis for my Fruit Garden Blanket CAL and so I returned to the incredible legacy of the Arts and Crafts Movement, using the ceramic designs of William De Morgan as the catalyst for this project.

De Morgan was a trained artist of great skill, but it is his ceramic tiles and pottery that he is best remembered for. His wife Evelyn was a Pre-Raphaelite artist and together they were highly influential within the movement. One of Evelyn's most recognised works is called Flora, hence the name of the project.



My Design Process

I found an image of a group of William De Morgan's tile designs on a postcard in the V&A Museum in London and was inspired to put together a mood board on Pinterest to help me focus on the aspects of William's work that I wanted to use for a design. You can find my mood board here:

<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/JanieCrow/william-de-morgan/>

Once I had the mood board in place, I started to pick my colour palette. De Morgan tended to stick to a couple of colour themes; one based very much on the colours found in natural florals and the other based on his love for Persian themed ceramics, where colours such as deep and aqua blues, orange, red and yellow dominate. For this project I wanted to use a palette that combined shades from both of William's favoured choices.

The yarns I have chosen for this project are Stylecraft Life DK and their 100% recycled yarn ReCreate, which I am totally smitten by, especially as it has a lovely tweedy effect and an incredibly long length at 350m per 100g ball. If you want to use shades from your stash you will need to source those that work to a DK weight. If you are unsure of what weight a yarn is (as it may have lost its label or ball band for example) use the notes on tension on page 6 as a guide.

If you want to move away from my colour choices and choose your own palette, why not look at my mood board on Pinterest and pick out some alternative shades. Perhaps you could think about a favourite painting or existing textiles you own and build a palette around that, or maybe consider the colours in your own home so that the project will match your décor.

Once I had chosen my yarn shades, I started to draw some ideas on paper. The fact that William designed tiles, which are square by nature, was a huge advantage as I was able to make my crochet designs fit the constraints of a square in the same way that he did. Once I had decided on the size of the squares, I drew out my ideas within them and then tried to replicate my pencil outlines in my crochet. My prototype motifs were decided on relatively quickly (which is unusual

for me), so then I worked on writing the patterns and photographing the motifs so that I could get an idea of how they worked as a collection.

I am incredibly pleased with the motifs I have designed and hope that you like them too. I am really looking forward to seeing how you will interpret my blocks and hope that some of you will embrace the idea of creating a unique project. However, if you want to follow my patterns and use my suggested yarns and colours then I also hope that you will also enjoy yourself!

Getting Started

The Spirit of Flora blanket is made from twelve crochet motifs, each of which need to be made four times to create a project that uses a total of forty-eight pieces. You can choose to create an exact copy of my original designs, or you can create your own unique layout. If you want to include some simpler motifs, you can find the free downloads patterns for three squares on the Janie Crow website.

You can find download patterns in our Etsy shop and on Ravelry. Paper patterns are available via the Janie Crow webstore.

Etsy:

<https://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/JanieCrowLtd>

Ravelry link:

<https://www.ravelry.com/designers/jane-crowfoot>

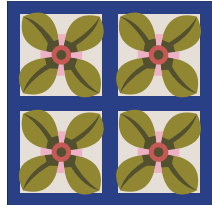
Website link:

<https://www.janiecrow.com>

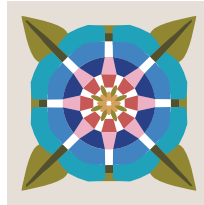
The first four patterns will be available from April 2024. The second set of four will be available from June 2024 and the final set of four patterns will be available from August 2024.

It is important that you read through the following information to ensure that you have all that you need and that you understand the fundamental techniques needed to complete the project.

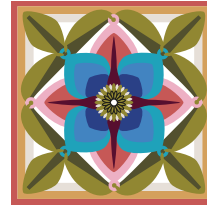
Motif Set One



Leaf Trellis



Moffatt Flower

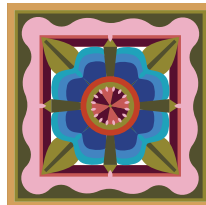


Merton Abbey Flower

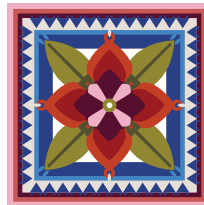


Tudor Rose

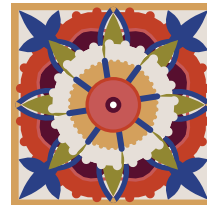
Motif Set Two



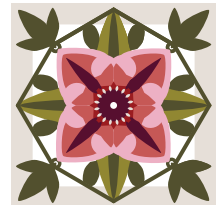
Marlborough Flower



Chelsea Flower

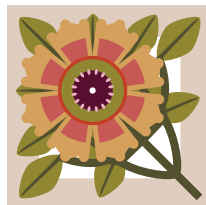


Gillow



Evelyn's Flower

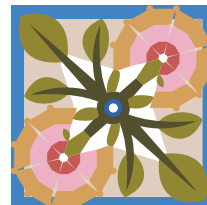
Motif Set Three (*Pair of Roses - pattern includes half motif too).



Sunflower



Pair of Roses*

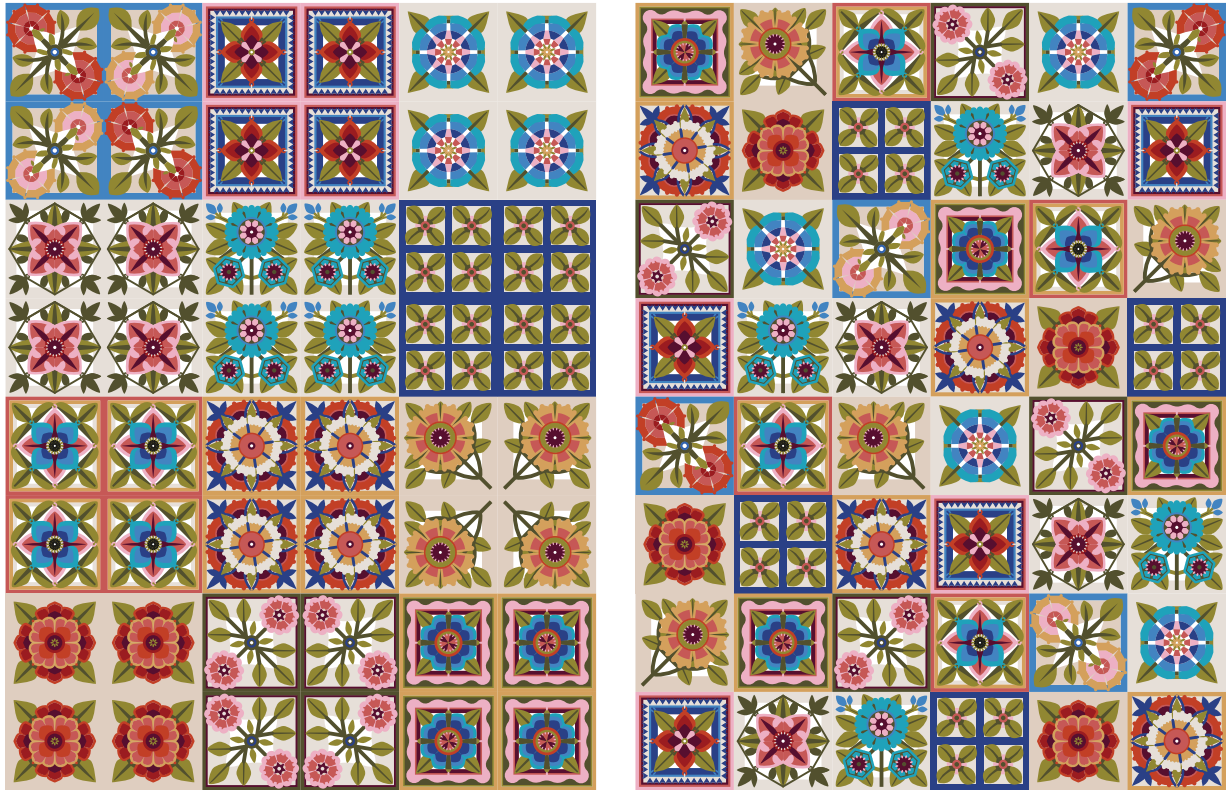


Double Carnations



Bedford Park Daisy





Project Layout

I suggest you do not block the motifs until you have put your project together. You can find guidance on how to wash and block your finished project in the free download document available via the Janie Crow website.

I made three versions of the blanket. Two of my blankets use all forty-eight motif blocks and my third version uses thirty-six to create a slightly smaller square lap blanket.

You can use my layouts as a guide for your project if you wish.

I created three alternative border patterns for my Spirit of Flora blankets. The patterns for these will be available as free download patterns on the Janie Crow website.

<https://www.janiecrow.com>

MEASUREMENT

Rectangular Blanket Blocked

Measurement:

approximately 117cm (46in) wide x 152cm (60in) long.

YARNS

Stylecraft Life DK

75% Premium Acrylic, 25% Wool

298m (326yds) per 100g

● Aqua (2357)	1 ball
● Caramel (2446)	1 ball
● Cardinal (2306)	1 ball
● Cascade (2308)	1 ball
● Copper (2312)	1 ball
● Cranberry (2319)	2 balls
● French Blue (2447)	2 balls
● Oatmeal (2303)	2 balls
● Olive (2302)	2 balls
● Parchment (2445)	2 balls

Stylecraft ReCreate DK

40% Wool, 30% Acrylic, 30% Polyester (All Recycled)

350m (382yds) per 100g

● Avocado (3189)	2 balls
● Blush (3458)	1 ball
● Rose (1945)	1 ball

EQUIPMENT

- 3.5mm (US E4), 4mm (US G/6) & 4.5mm (US 7) hooks - see notes on tension
- Stitch Markers
- Large Eye Darning Needle

TENSION

Crochet is by nature an organic and creative process. It is wonderful to pick up some yarn and a hook and create motifs and decorative pieces that eventually make up a larger project. Many crocheters are used to doing just this without thinking too much about how big their pieces come up and whether things are being worked to the correct tension. However, it is important that you check your tension before starting this project and that you do so regularly as you work through it. Changes in tension could mean that the size and drape of your shawl differs to mine and that you will use more or less yarn.

How to achieve the correct tension

Many crocheters simply assume that they will achieve the correct tension. This is a totally logical conclusion to make; after all, the information on the ball band or within

the pattern is based on what the 'standard' tension is. In practice, however, many crocheters do not naturally attain the correct tension and therefore do not achieve a tension that sits within the 'standard'.

Working a tension piece

When working a tension piece, it is a good idea to work on more stitches and rows than the suggested tension. I used 24 stitches for both samples. The tension is taken from pre-blocked swatches. It is important that you measure your tension to at least 10cm when working the test swatches - if in doubt measure over a larger piece, say 15cm or even 20cm just to be sure. Putting the groundwork in at this stage can save you a lot of heartache later.

I have measured the tension over samples made using Stylecraft Life DK.

The pre-blocked tension you are aiming for is as follows:

Double Crochet (US single crochet) using **4mm hook (US G/6)** = 20/21sts & 24 rows to 10cm (4in).

Treble Crochet (US double crochet) using **3.5mm hook (US E4)** = 19/20sts & 10 rows to 10cm (4in).

How to make your double crochet (US single crochet) tension sample

Using **4mm hook (US G/6)** make 25ch.

Foundation Row: skip 1ch, 1dc into each ch to end, turn. **(24sts)**

Row 1: 1ch (does not count as a st), 1dc into each st to end, turn. **(24sts)**

Repeat Row 1 until a total of 26 rows have been worked (including Foundation Row). Lay your sample on a flat surface.

Using a tape measure place pins 10cm (4in) apart along a central row (horizontally) and count the stitches between the pins.

Stitch tension should be = 20/21 sts

Using a tape measure place pins 10cm (4in) apart along the central point of the swatch vertically and count the rows between the pins.

Row tension should be = 24 rows

If you have achieved a tension different to this, then take a look at the advice a little further down.

How to make your treble crochet (US double crochet) tension sample

A smaller size hook is used to achieve the treble crochet (US double crochet) tension compared to the double crochet (US single

crochet) tension. This is because the space between stitches grows depending on the length of the post of the stitch.

Using **3.5mm hook (US E4)** make 26ch.

Foundation Row: skip 3ch (counts as 1tr), 1tr into each ch to end, turn. **(24sts)**

Row 1: 3ch (counts as a 1tr), skip st at base of 3ch, 1tr into each st to end working final st into 3rd ch of 3ch (tch) made at beginning of last row, turn. **(24sts)**

Repeat Row 1 until a total of 12 rows have been worked (including Foundation Row). Lay your sample on a flat surface. Using a tape measure place pins 10cm (4in) apart along a central row and count the stitches between the pins.

Stitch tension should be = 19/20 sts

Using a tape measure place pins 10cm (4in) apart along the central point of the swatch vertically and count the rows between the pins.

Row tension should be = 10 rows

What to do when you have achieved a different tension to the pattern

If you have done your tension pieces and achieved more stitches and rows to 10cm (4in) this means you are working too tightly. Rather than trying to change your crochet





method by consciously crocheting looser stitches, simply change up to a larger size hook. If you still have too many stitches and rows, try a hook another size larger. Make a note of how many sizes you have had to change by so that you are sure to make the same swap for each of the hook sizes.

If you have done your tension pieces and achieved fewer stitches and rows to 10cm (4in) this means you are working too loosely. Rather than trying to change your crochet method by consciously crocheting tighter, simply change down to a smaller size hook. If you still have too many stitches and rows, try a hook another size smaller. As above, make a note of how many sizes you have had to change by so that you are sure to make the same swap for each of the hook sizes.

Pre-blocked and Blocked tension

The measurements given in the pattern are for pre-blocked sizes throughout. Measuring to a pre-blocked size rather than a blocked size is more accurate as you could over stretch your work in the blocking process.

Once the project is complete, I advise you to wash and block your project before using it. This process will alter the tension slightly and will make the yarn appear smoother and the drape will improve. It is advisable to use a colour catching sheet when washing your project too, especially if using yarns from different ranges.

FACTORS THAT CAN AFFECT YOUR TENSION

Many things can make a difference to the tension you achieve. I have listed five of the most common below.

Your level of expertise

If you are a newcomer to the craft of crochet you may well find that your crochet tension will change as your ability improves. When launching into a project like this it is worth making sure you have put in enough groundwork to ensure that you are working in the right way and that you have the ability to work consistently.

Your mood or situation

If you are a bit stressed or have had a bit of a tough day you may find your crochet tension is affected. Equally, having a few glasses of wine or watching a funny or enthralling movie whilst crocheting can also cause your tension to differ. As a general rule try to crochet in the same kind of situation whenever possible to ensure that everything stays as it should.

HOOK SIZE

Make sure you are using the correct size hook. For most of the project you will be asked to use a **4mm (US G/6) hook**. Please check that you have not mistakenly used a **UK 4 (imperial size)** or a **US 4 or 4/E**.

Number of stitches

It is quite common to achieve the correct tension on a swatch only to find that it is not correct over a larger piece. This is because tension can change as we relax into the rhythm of a repetitive crochet action. Measure your tension at all the places I ask you to within the pattern just to be sure you are continuing to work at the correct tension.

HAVING TROUBLE WITH YOUR TENSION OVER TREBLE CROCHET (US DOUBLE CROCHET)?

Look at the way you work the stitch

Because of the nature of a treble crochet (US double crochet) it is common to find variances in stitch length and width even if the correct hook has been used in relation to the one used to achieve the correct tension over double crochet (US single crochet).

When we make a treble crochet (US double crochet) we wrap our yarn around the hook first and then work three movements, drawing yarn loops through others to create the stitch. The tension achieved over each of these movements and the angle at which we hold our hook can have an impact on the tension of each step of the stitch.

Why you need to change hook size when you are told to

The reason you will need to change hook size is to do with the tension achieved over different stitches. When you make a fabric using a dense stitch like double crochet (US single crochet) you have very little room between the posts of your stitches, whereas when you work with stitches that

have a longer post, such as treble crochet (US double crochet) the space between the posts of the stitches gets bigger.

I recommend the use of a **4mm (US G/6) hook** for much of the crochet within this project, but there are places where you will need to swap down to a **3.5mm (US E/4)** or up to a **4.5mm (US 7)**. As rule, look out for hook changes when working treble crochet (US double crochet) and slip stitches. Hook sizes are marked in **bold** within the written patterns.

Changing hook sizes can be a bit of a pain, but it is made easier if you have colour coded hooks - even a dab of different shades of nail polish on your crochet hook handles can make the process of identifying hooks easier.

YARN USAGE

It is my advice that you keep hold of all your yarn until the end of the project - by this I mean all the pieces you might undo and any pieces that look a bit frayed. Don't be tempted to use any of the yarn for any other project until you have completed this one and make sure you keep everything in a safe place.

Below you will find the yarn amounts I had left over once the project was complete.

Stylecraft Life DK

Shade	Quantity Opened	Amount left over
● Aqua (2357)	1	71g
● Caramel (2446)	1	15
● Cardinal (2306)	1	85g
● Cascade (2308)	1	31g
● Cranberry (2319)	2	83g
● Copper (2312)	1	66g
● French Blue (2447)	2	68g
● Oatmeal (2303)	2	48g
● Olive (2302)	2	60g
● Parchment (2445)	2	32g

Stylecraft ReCreate DK

● Avocado (3189)	2	33g
● Blush (3458)	1	22g
● Rose (1945)	1	23g

Note: In the lists above, the amount of yarn recommended is enough to complete the blanket project in my original forty-eight motif layouts. The amounts are based on a series of tests. Please see notes on yarn usage and tension to guide you.

Substituting yarn

If you are substituting yarn, it is important that you find one that achieves the correct tension and has enough metres of yarn on the ball - don't assume that every 100g ball of yarn has the same length!

Most yarns fall into set categories according to their weight. In the UK we have the following standard weights: 1, 2, 3 & 4ply, DK (Double Knitting), Aran and Chunky. The yarns used within this design are all DK weight. Yarns within each weight category should conform to the same standards, one of which is the suggested knitted or crocheted tension. Most ball bands will show you the suggested tension for knitting. For a DK weight yarn this is 22 stitches and 30 rows measured over 10cm [4in].

Yarns sit within the categories to make it easier to ensure that things come up the right size. This is especially handy when substituting yarn, as, in theory, a DK weight yarn should achieve more or less the same tension regardless of brand or yarn content.





The ball band on the yarn will give you the suggested tension and the needle or hook size that this tension is to be achieved on.

Found a yarn in your stash but not sure what it is?

If you've got some yarn you'd like to use, but it has no label or ball band, you can still work out whether it is a good substitute for your project. To determine the ply/weight of the yarn, work a tension piece as detailed on page 7.

If your tension is approximately the same as mine and it matches with only a little adjustment (See "what to do when you have achieved a different tension to the pattern"), then the yarn will likely work well as a substitute.

You will also need to determine how much yarn you have in terms of length to ensure you don't run out. You can measure this as follows:

Wind off 10 metres of your chosen yarn and weigh it. You can then roughly determine the weight per metre by dividing the weight

by 10. Once you have done this, weigh the full ball and divide that number by the weight per metre. The resulting number will be the approximate length on the ball.

Here is an example:

- The weight of the ball of yarn is 80g.
- 10 metres of yarn weighs 4g.
- 4 divided by 10 = 0.4g

This is the weight of yarn per metre.

Divide the weight of the ball of yarn (80g) by the weight per metre (0.4g) to determine (fairly accurately) that the amount left on the ball is 200 metres.

Once you have these calculations in place you can refer to the meterage quoted in our suggested yarn listings and decide whether it is sufficient for the project.

ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

The patterns are written using UK and US terminology. A flag symbol on the front cover of the pattern will guide you. You will find a chart of abbreviations within each pattern.

Understanding Charts

This pattern includes crochet charts alongside the written instructions. The beauty of a chart is that they provide you with a visual reference of how your crochet should look.

Chart symbols are universal and are not governed by the language or terminology the pattern is written in. Each symbol on the chart represents a stitch or instruction and these are shown on an accompanying key chart. Charts are usually created in black type. Ours also include rounds shown in other colours to help you note specific instructions.

Charts in the Spirit of Flora patterns are drawn for right-handed crocheters so the assumption is that the chart is followed counter-clockwise for right side rounds and counter-clockwise for wrong side rounds. You may find arrows to indicate the direction of the work. The arrows represent the instruction to turn rather than telling you to work backwards along a round.

Notes for left-handed crocheters

According to statistics, approximately one in nine members of the population are left-handed. The fabric created by crocheting left-handed usually shows no difference in appearance to that made by a right-handed crocheter, although some left handers do create a slightly more textural stitch by taking the yarn round the hook in the opposite direction when crocheting.

As I have explained, right-handed crocheters work in a counter-clockwise direction. Left-handed crocheters work in a clockwise direction, with rows working left to right instead of right to left.

The brains of left-handed crocheters appear to manage to flip instructions without too much of a challenge, however, there are some areas where left-handed crocheters might find their work looks different to that of right handers, such as when creating shapes that are not equilateral, such as when making

asymmetrical triangle shawls or more freeform shapes, which will result as a mirror image to that of a right hander.

If you crochet left-handed and want to work from a chart, you need to work from one that is a mirror image of those found in the patterns. If you own a smart phone, take an image of the chart on your phone, then edit it to save a mirror image. If you are not able to flip the image on your phone, hold a mirror against the pattern page and take a shot of the reflection.

DEALING WITH YARN ENDS

Sewing yarn ends in as you go makes the finishing process much easier and means you are less likely to lose stitches or make errors with tension.

FURTHER READING:

If you'd like to learn more about William De Morgan and his wife Evelyn, you can visit

the De Morgan Foundation website where you'll be able to read more about their lives and careers and see more of their exquisite artworks.

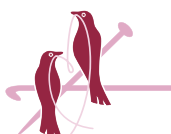
I am so grateful to Sarah Hardy at the Foundation for allowing me to use images of some of their fabulous work, including some of William's gorgeous tiles and the painting 'Flora' by Evelyn, which inspired many of the floral motifs in the project.

<https://www.demorgan.org.uk/>

We are very fortunate to have been allowed to use the Emery Walker House in Hammersmith, London as the location for our photography shoot. Walker was a friend of William Morris and played a pivotal role in the Arts and Crafts Movement. He collected some incredible examples of art from his contemporaries, including De Morgan. This is a wonderfully preserved and lovingly curated museum and well worth a visit.

<https://www.emerywalker.org.uk/>





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crochet

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